

Made in the Middle

Contemporary Craft
from the Midlands

Exhibition Guide

Introduction

Made in the Middle tells a story of exceptional contemporary craft and design made in the Midlands. This ninth version showcases the work of thirty-seven artists. They represent the region's vibrant and diverse creative community.

Thirty-one of the artists were selected through an open call, by a panel of curators and craft experts. Many created new work for this exhibition which demonstrates creative developments.

The exhibitors include both emerging talents and established names. Their work highlights powerful stories about the world we live in.

Made in the Middle will be inspiring for anyone interested in making, seeing or buying craft.

This guide has information to support your visit, including access resources, exhibition themes and a list of exhibitors. You can take any route around the exhibition and the guide will ensure you don't miss a thing. We hope you enjoy your visit.

**A touring exhibition from
Craftspace with Leicester Gallery**

The exhibition is supported by a catalogue available from the venue or Craftspace website.

craftspace.co.uk/mitm
#MadeITM

Support for your visit:

Access resources

Some of the exhibits have been audio and BSL described. To view these recordings you will need a smart phone and headphones. If you don't have a smart phone or headphones please ask a member of the venue staff for the exhibition tablet and headphones.



For Audio Described works look for this sticker.



For BSL Described pieces look for this sticker.



Large print labels are also available at the introduction to the exhibition.

Activity Guides

There is a free activity guide for exercises to do in the exhibition and at home. If you missed it at the exhibition introduction, do pop back and check it out.

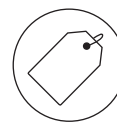
Can you touch the work?



Some of the exhibits can be touched. Their object label is marked with this symbol.

There are also handling trolleys, where you can pick up and explore samples of other works.

Is the work for sale?



Many of the exhibits are for sale. You can tell by the sale tag icon on the object label. There is a sales guide at the introduction to the exhibition. This has all the prices of the exhibits that are for sale. Do also look for the Made in the Middle shop in the venue. It is a selection of smaller items by the exhibiting artists, pieces you can buy and take home today!

Events

Events are listed on a clipboard on the introduction panel. Please ask a member of staff if you have any questions.

Themes

In the exhibition you can explore three themes. The materials things are made from, the craft techniques used and the stories the artists want to share. Each theme is colour coded: green for materials, yellow for techniques and blue for stories.

Six of the artists were invited by Guest Curator Jazz Swali, with curatorial support by Marta Marsicka. Their pieces reflect the enriching cultural impact of global migration to the region. This selection is highlighted with pink labels.



Materials

The artists included in this group are particularly interested in exploring the qualities of the materials they use. Some take traditional craft media like clay, metal or paper and use them in new ways. For others it is about creating new substances out of waste products.

These artists are driven by a curiosity about how materials work and what they can do.

Johnny Armstrong

From left to right;
Piece and chunk, Together in blue
The way the colours fell into pink
Like landscapes they landed 2024
Pigmented Plasterstone and steel

Hereford

Techniques

The craft sector is rich in skills. All artists showing in Made in the Middle are exceptional makers. However, for the artists in this group, it is experimentation with techniques that provides the focus for their work.

Some of the artists work to develop new processes. Others explore pushing techniques to work in new ways. There are also those that focus on perfecting traditional skills.

For all these artists the way they make is as important to them as what they make.



Jade Webb
Triptych of sorts, 2024
Wool, hemp, raw silk
Leicester



Nilupa Yasmin
Studio image

Birmingham

Stories

This section draws together the artists who tell stories through their work. Some may be sharing histories of their community. While others are exploring the injustices of the world. There is also work that examines personal identity, or the generous sharing of the artist's own experiences.

Whether the stories are about themselves or the world around us, they all draw us into the subjects the artists are sharing.

Shaping the Landscape

Making and Movement

This selection of six artists celebrates the region's cultural heritage. The evolving creative identity is also demonstrated. Invited by Jazz Swali with Craftspace, the collection features Tereza Bušková, Halima Cassell, Xin Chen, Chris Day, Farwa Moledina and Klara Szafrańska.

These deeply personal works explore themes of cultural heritage, mythology, global migration, identity, and resilience. Through diverse mediums including glass, ceramics, and textiles.

Chris's poignant sculptures confront the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade. Farwa's gold-threaded textile celebrates the revolutionary influence of Muslim women. Halima's hand-carved clay sculptures draw from global mythologies, creating intricate narratives. Klara Szafrańska merges queer identity with transnational experiences through ceramic dreamscapes. Xin Chen creates whimsical ceramic worlds embracing spontaneity and connection. Tereza Bušková reimagines British and European traditions through performance and participatory projects and celebrating the resilience of migrant mothers.

These artists are working in the wake of changing and challenging global dynamics. Within Made in the Middle these works underscore how identity, global migration, diaspora, and cultural exchange continuously reshape contemporary craft. Collectively, these artists challenge us to rethink cultural narratives and embrace the impact of diverse perspectives on artistic expression.

As outlined in the introduction the themes are colour coded. However, the exhibits are not displayed in these groups. To ensure you can see all of the work in Made in the Middle here is a list of all the exhibitors. You can check them off as you see them.

Materials:

Clare Pentlow	Paper
Emma-Jane Rule	Metalwork
Fran Buxton	Mixed Media
Johnny Armstrong	Pigmented Plasterstone and Steel
Katie Smith	Ceramics
Lucy Baxendale	Ceramics and Electronics
Natalie Cole	Biomaterials and Wood
Ruiya Xu	Jewellery
Verity Howard	Ceramics
Zoë Hillyard	Biomaterials

Techniques:

Jade Webb	Textiles
Jennifer Collier	Paper
Keisha Brittle	Glass
Keeley Traae	3D Printing
Nobuko Okumura	Metalwork
Olivia Ricketts	Furniture
Robert Maurice King	Mixed Media
Roo Dhissou	Carpentry and Ceramics
Sarah-May Johnson	Textiles

Stories:

Aishah Carberry	Paper
Jo Cope	Mixed Media
Karina Thompson	Textiles
Mahawa Keita	Textiles
Martha Wiles	Ceramics
Melanie Tomlinson	Mixed Media
Michaela McMillan	Mixed Media
Nilupa Yasmin	Woven Photography
Oliver Bliss	Textiles
Oxana Geets	Ceramics
Paul McAllister	Ceramics
Rachael Colley	Jewellery, Metalwork and Woodwork

Shaping the Landscape: Making and Movement:

Tereza Bušková	Mixed Media
Halima Cassell	Ceramics
Xin Chen	Ceramics
Chris Day	Glass
Farwa Moledina	Textiles
Klara Szafrńska	Ceramics

Featured within the exhibition is a project Craftspace initiated to explore people's stories of making who have migrated to the Midlands from other countries. Don't miss the project film in the exhibition.



Watch the film to hear their stories, or see our full collection at craftspace.co.uk/mitm-making-stories



Stories of Making & Migration

We have been collecting stories of making in the Midlands that are influenced by migration. We met with 'everyday makers' who craft for themselves, making at home, in a local studio or with a community. Through jewellery, pottery, crochet, textiles, blacksmithing and batik, their work celebrates the cultural and ethnic diversity of the Midlands. It highlights how craft skills that migrate with the makers influence creativity.

We met makers of South American, African, Caribbean, South Asian and East Asian heritage. They tell of a love for making and craft. Whether self-taught, passed down through family or shared within their community.

It has been a privilege to work with them to weave together a rich tapestry of stories across the Midlands.

Research, documentation and storytelling by Hayley Salter, a Birmingham based photographer, film-maker and creative producer.

About Craftspace

Craftspace is a charity creating opportunities to see, make and be curious about exceptional contemporary craft. We champion the power of craft to change lives and communities. We believe craft values and thinking contribute to ensuring a progressive and cohesive society.

Based in Birmingham, we work collaboratively regionally, nationally and internationally.

We build relationships between artists, people and organisations and encourage the sharing of ideas, skills and knowledge. With over 35 years' experience, we continue to learn, push boundaries and challenge ideas. Craftspace initiates artistic programmes which stimulate creative excellence, critical thinking and understanding of contemporary crafts in the widest social and cultural contexts.



Tereza Bušková

Mothers Insignia
2021

Birch framing with sapele splines, MDF, wool, felt, plastic canvas, sequins, gold trimming, thread

Birmingham

Join us in making a positive difference.

With your support, we can nurture more talent and reach more people. There are many different ways to support us. You can make a donation or buy something from our online shop. You can join Craftspace+, our community of supporters who we provide with insights into the rich and varied world of contemporary making.

To donate, or join Craftspace+, and see other ways to support us visit:



Support Us

craftspace.co.uk/support-us



Newsletter sign up

craftspace.co.uk/about/sign-up

Find out more

For details of tour venues, digital content, resources, events and information for schools go to: craftspace.co.uk



Environmental responsibility

Craftspace aims to be as sustainable as possible when developing and touring exhibitions. The design and print takes into account use of environmentally friendly materials and methods of production. The exhibition plinths and stands, panels and labels are all designed to be reused or recycled.

The exhibition stands have been repurposed from previous Craftspace exhibitions Made in the Middle 2012 and We are Commoners 2021, as well as some of Leicester Gallery's temporary exhibition walls.

Your feedback

We would love to know what you thought of the exhibition. Please complete our online survey to share your experience of Made in the Middle. We evaluate all our activities to report to our funders Arts Council England.



Spread the word!

Share content about the exhibition. Don't forget to tag us: #MadeITM

 [craftspace](https://www.facebook.com/craftspace)

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